

Letter in Support of Magnet Schools

February 15, 2017

Dear Senator Catherine Osten, Senator Paul Formica, and Representative Toni Walker,

I am writing to share my education story and shed light on the value of magnet schools. I am a STEM Coach at the Discovery Academy in Wethersfield and support teachers and students in science lessons, technology integration, engineering application, and math curriculum as well as intervention for struggling students. My school has a high minority population and 43% of our students receive free or reduced lunch. Our students come from 35 towns and close to 1/2 of our students are from the inner city. We have a rigorous curriculum and high standards. Discovery Academy students make incredible gains and outperform many districts with smaller minority populations. Students are learning about engineering principles, coding as young as 5 years old, and learning about the foundations of robotics in preschool. Our 5th graders are learning about Changemaking and working on local, statewide, national and worldwide problems. We are showing students how academics are integrated and building a foundation for success in the elementary grades. I have seen how offering high standards education in a theme focused school makes an impact. Our first class of 5th graders are graduating this spring and I know they will move on to secondary and higher education with a foundation for success. As students go through the complete CREC school will truly see the power in a complete magnet school education.

My passion has been to help students be effective citizens and give them tools and opportunities to experience learning the real world. I have worked in education for 18 years and prior to teaching I was in the business sector 20 years in multimedia and computer marketing. I taught 5th and 3rd grade in West Hartford and recently left the classroom to work for CREC. I have represented the State of Connecticut in Washington D.C. as a John McCormack award winner. I have traveled to Brazil to visit schools in a national global education study and went to Japan with the Fulbright memorial scholarship to tour Japanese schools. Discovery Academy has over 30 countries represented by 1st generation families. I can tell you first hand that the Connecticut schools I have work in are teaching children to be global citizens able to solve real problems.

Our schools need to be funded to continue the important work we do. The opportunity to work in a CREC school that brought inner city and suburban students together was a dream opportunity for me. Daily, I watch student be pushed to their true potential and our test scores show that student can succeed, and the achievement gap can be closed, with the right environment. Please give careful consideration to funding magnet schools so we can give all students the learning environment they deserve.

Sincerely,

Clare Neseralla

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